

and 18 (now renumbered as Claims 6, 15, and 24 respectively), and renumber the claims and claim dependencies as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

apply, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network, and wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises at least one of: an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier and a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

2. (New) The shipping management computer system of Claim 1 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier.

3. (New) The shipping management computer system of Claim 1 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

4. (Original Claim 2 Currently Amended) A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

identify, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

5. (Original Claim 3 Currently Amended) A shipping management computer system, said shipping management computer system programmed to:

collect as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network;

store in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the particular user.

6. (Original Claim 4 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 3) The shipping management computer system of claim 5, said shipping management computer system further programmed to:

collect as parcel specifications for a particular parcel, user input from the particular user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel.

7. (Original Claim 5 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 4) The shipping management computer system of claim 6, said shipping management computer system further programmed to:

apply a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

8. (Original Claim 6 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 5) The shipping management computer system of claim 7, said shipping management computer system further programmed to:

determine for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the billing option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as

applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

9. (Original Claim 7 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 6) The computer system of claim 8, said computer system further programmed to:

calculate a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

10. (Original Claim 8 Currently Amended) A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

applying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network, and wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises at least one of: an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier and a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

11. (New) The method of Claim 10 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier.

12. (New) The method of Claim 10 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

13. (Original Claim 9 Currently Amended) A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

identifying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

14. (Original Claim 10 Currently Amended) A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

collecting as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network; and

storing in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the particular user.

15. (Original Claim 11 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 10) The method of claim 14, said method further comprising:

collecting as parcel specifications for a particular parcel, user input from the particular user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel.

16. (Original Claim 12 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 11) The method of claim 15, said method further comprising:

applying a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

17. (Original Claim 13 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 12) The method of claim 16, said method further comprising:

determining for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the billing option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

18. (Original Claim 14 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 13) The method of claim 17, said method further comprising:

calculating a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

19. (Original Claim 15 Currently Amended) A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

a set of program instructions for applying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network, and wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises at least one of: an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier and a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

20. (New) The computer program product of Claim 19 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises an indication of billing options acceptable to the carrier.

21. (New) The computer program product of Claim 19 wherein the set of billing option rules for each carrier comprises a pricing rule for one or more billing options.

22. (Original Claim 16 Currently Amended) A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

a set of program instructions for identifying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

23. (Original Claim 17 Currently Amended) A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

a set of program instructions for collecting as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network; and

a set of program instructions for storing in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the particular user.

24. (Original Claim 18 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 17) The computer program product of claim 23, said computer program product further comprising:

a set of program instructions for collecting as parcel specifications for a particular parcel, user input from the particular user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel.

25. (Original Claim 19 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 18) The computer program product of claim 24, said computer program product further comprising:

a set of program instructions for applying a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

26. (Original Claim 20 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 19) The computer program product of claim 25, said computer program product further comprising:

a set of program instructions for determining for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the billing option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

27. (Original Claim 21 Currently Amended and Previously Dependent on Original Claim 20) The computer program product of claim 26, said computer program product further comprising: